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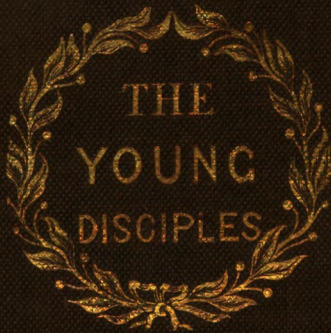
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THE
YOUNG DISCIPLES.

“They, through the glorious vista, see,
Sublime, creation’s Deity.”

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THE YOUNG DISCIPLES.

"They, through the glorious vista, see,
Sublime, creation's Deity."

"MAMMA," said little Edgar, "we want you to promise something—something that will please us all very much. Will you, dear mamma?"

"Without knowing what that 'something' is? No, no; I make no promises in the dark."

Edgar, laughing, "In the dark, mamma? I cannot see what light has to do with promises! But, if you want more, I can soon pull up the other blind, and then there will be light enough for any thing."

"Stay, Edgar; *that* is not the sort of light you must give me; that light will not shine where I want it. Cannot you remember?"

"Oh, now I know! It is your mind wants to see, not your eyes; and the sun cannot shine in there. How stupid I was not to recollect at first what you were telling me about figurative language! So I am to enlighten your mind, by telling you what the promise is to be about? Am I right now, mamma?"

"Yes, my dear."

"But I am afraid of hearing you say, No; we shall be *so* disappointed!"

"Then you wish to have your request granted, even though it may be bad for you, or inconvenient to me? Is it so, Edgar?"

"Oh no, mamma! I will tell you directly. We wish you to take us a nice walk by moonlight, it is so very fine; there is not a cloud to be seen. May I tell sisters you will?"

"Yes, Edgar. We will be all ready to start at about eight. Mary will like to watch the stars rise."

"Stars rise! How can that be? I have heard of the sun rising, and of the moon rising, but I did not know the stars rose."

"I will try and explain to you how it is. But are not your sisters waiting to know whether they may have the pleasure of a walk?"

"Oh yes; they told me to come to them directly. I quite forgot." So Edgar ran to his sisters, exclaiming, "We may go; mamma says so! And she is going to tell me all about the stars, so I cannot stay a minute; but do come, too." And the little group were presently seated by Mrs. Elmore.

"And now, mamma," said Edgar, "we want to hear about the stars rising."

"Which of you can tell me, first, what makes the sun *appear* to rise? Do you know, Ellen?"

"I think I do. The earth is always turning round, and the sun appears to rise to that part of the earth which is just turning to the sun."

"Then," said Edgar, "the sun is always rising to some part of the earth; and you and Ellen said, '*appears* to rise,' because, really, it is the earth that moves, and the sun is quite still. Mamma, I should like to have a wooden ball for the sun, and another wooden ball for the earth, to make it turn just as the earth does to the sun."

"And how would you manage it?"

Edgar was silent a minute, and then said, thoughtfully, "I cannot make my little worlds

float through the air, mamma. I think I had better fasten my sun to a long stick, which I must nail to a wooden table ; and if I make a hole through the table for the stick on which I fasten my earth, and wind a cord round the end of the stick which is through the table, I can make my earth turn round for day and night, by just pulling the string very slowly. And I can make the different countries on the earth, that I may see how they all turn to the sun, once in the four-and-twenty hours. Oh, it will do so nicely !”

“ But, Edgar,” said Ellen, “ you have forgotten that the days and nights are not all the same length ; and your earth will have no summer and winter.”

“ And,” said Mary, “ the middle of your ball will get so very hot, while the poles will have no sun all the year round.”

“ Oh dear ! then I do not know to manage it, and I thought I knew all about it. Do help me, mamma.”

“ Let your sisters try first. Tell your brother, Ellen, what motion in our earth produces summer and winter.”

“ The earth travelling round the sun.”

"Then I must make the outside edge of my wooden table move round in grooves, something like the shutters, Ellen; and then it will carry the earth, quite steadily, round the sun."

"But still," said Ellen, "I do not know how it is, but I do not see, mamma, that it makes any difference which side of the sun the earth is passing, unless one side is not so hot as the other; and then the days and nights will be all the same length. How can it be?"

"The sun, my dear, turns round in five-and-twenty days, just as our earth does in one: so that if one side were colder than the other, we should have very short and frequent changes in the seasons. I think you must ask Mary to help you now."

"The poles of your earth must be placed in a sloping direction, and must always point the same way, in the same manner as those of our earth towards what is called, for that reason, the polar star; and then the poles of your earth will, like ours, have summer and winter, when, as it passes round the sun, first one, and then the other, will incline towards it."

"Then," said Ellen, "the poles of the earth being placed sloping, is called being inclined to

the orbit. What does orbit mean, mamma? I did not understand those words, and that is the reason I forgot what you were teaching me."

"The earth's orbit is its path round the sun. You see, my little girl, that, for want of asking the meaning of those two words, you missed a step in the ladder of knowledge."

"I am sure," said Edgar, in a very disappointed tone, "I cannot manage my earth now, for I shall never carry it round the sun, sloping to its own path."

"I did not think you could; it requires more machinery than you will at present know how to contrive; and if you can understand how our beautiful earth travels its yearly round, you will not want your wooden balls, which, after all, could not shew the true proportions of the sizes or the distances of the several planets from the sun."

"What is meant, mamma, by 'true proportions'?"

"The relative sizes of bodies, compared one to another; for instance, the sun is nearly a million of times larger than our earth, its diameter being more than a hundred times longer than the diameter of our planet."

"Stop, dear mamma!" cried Edgar; "I do not know what diameter means."

"Diameter is the measurement through the centre of a circle or globe; it is nearly one-third of its circumference, or what it would measure round. If, then, you take one inch for a thousand miles, the earth, which is twenty-five thousand miles round, would be twenty-five inches; and the sun must be two thousand, seven hundred and sixty-four inches; and its distance from the earth, after the same proportion, would be ninety-five thousand inches, or nearly one mile and a half; so that, even on that scale, you would not be able to find space in any room for your representation, and there is no machinery that could make your earth move round at the distance of a mile and a half. We must, therefore, I think, be content with the descriptions which our minds can give and receive.*—But here come little Alice and baby. We must not talk to them of suns and planets; their minds have not yet taken steps enough up the ladder of knowledge, of which we were speaking, to be ready to understand this."

"I am sure," said Ellen, "I cannot think

* See note page 12.

how such wonderful worlds can be ! I wish I knew as much as Mary, or as you do, mamma."

"Or as those much wiser than mamma, my dear, and you would still perceive how little a creature can know of the great Creator's works and ways ; at least in this passing world, this infancy of our being."

And now the little ones came into the room. Mary and Ellen were too much interested in the conversation that had just passed, to feel at first inclined to notice them ; but Alice wanted sister Ellen's help, to tie up a nosegay of wild flowers which she emptied into her lap : and baby soon won Mary's attention, by putting her little face for a kiss through the back of a chair which she was driving before her about the room, then hiding and peeping again, till sister forgot for awhile every thing but her sunny face and joyous laugh ; and when they were taken to bed, and tea was brought in, the children were surprised to find that they had no time to spare, and that the afternoon, which they had thought would be so long, was already gone.

The bonnets and shawls were soon on ; and after a hunt for Edgar's gloves, which he was

amusing himself with throwing to the dog when his sisters were talking of asking Mrs. Elmore to take them out, the happy party set out through the shrubbery, as they wished to go by the lane, and return over the common.

"Oh, look, mamma!" said Ellen, as they came to an opening between the beautifully large elms which grew on one side the lane, "look at that very large star! I think it must be the largest in the whole heavens. What is it called?"

"Jupiter. Its diameter is eleven times longer than the diameter of the Earth; and although the largest of the planets, it is not nearly the largest star in the whole heavens. The bulk of Jupiter is fourteen hundred times more than that of the Earth."

"Oh, mamma!" was the general exclamation; and Ellen said, "I thought our Earth so very wonderful; but fourteen hundred times as large, mamma? And does it float through the air like our Earth, and has it days, and nights, and years, the same? And has it people, too, to live in it? This would, indeed, be more wonderful still."

"They speak alike of a Being to whom nothing is impossible."

“And that was what David felt, when he said, ‘The heavens declare the glory of God.’ But, mamma, are there really people in that world?”

“We do not *know* whether it is inhabited; but since, in about twelve of our years, it travels round the sun, and has days and nights,* nearly half the length of ours, and four moons, which attend it in its course; it seems hardly likely that He who does nothing in vain should not there have placed minds, images, though faint, of the Infinite Mind, who could, like David, read the Creator’s glories in His works.”

“And are there other worlds besides, which move round the sun?”

“Yes, my dear; eleven in all, besides their attendant moons, but none so large as Jupiter. The sizes of the smaller planets are not known, but they are thought, by some astronomers, to be about twelve hundred miles in diameter.”*

* The following extract, from the pen of one of our most scientific writers, will give a good idea of the relative sizes and distances of the planets from the Sun, particularly as the objects used in the illustration are so familiar to every reader:—“Choose any well levelled field or bowling-green. On it place a globe two feet in diameter; this will represent the Sun; Mercury will be represented by a grain of mustard seed, on the circum-

"We will not ask you to tell us more to-night," said Mary. "I feel already quite perplexed, as if worlds were too great for me to think of."

"We ought not to be surprised, that we, who cannot comprehend the growth of a blade of grass, or the life of the smallest insect which we can see only through a microscope, should feel our thoughts perplexed when we attempt to raise them to the worlds around. Little, indeed, can we ever know of creation's perfect work, till

' The appointed time,
When all these splendours bursting on our sight
Shall stand unveil'd, and to our ravish'd sense
Unlock the glories of the world unknown.'

ference of a circle 164 feet in diameter for its orbit; Venus, a pea, on a circle 284 feet in diameter; the Earth, also, a pea, on a circle of 430 feet; Mars, a rather large pin's head, on a circle of 654 feet; Juno, Ceres, Vesta, and Pallas, grains of sand, in orbits of from 1000 to 1200 feet; Jupiter a moderate sized orange, in a circle nearly half a mile across; Saturn, a small orange, on a circle four-fifths of a mile; and Uranus, a full sized cherry, or small plum, upon the circumference of a circle more than a mile and a half in diameter."—*Treatise on Astronomy*, by Sir JOHN F. W. HERSCHEL, p. 287.

"Yet, mamma," said Mary, after a long pause, "is there not a use in knowing a little, even though it can be but little, in this world?"

"Soloman has said, 'Wise men lay up knowledge,' and every opportunity of acquiring it is a talent which we ought not 'to wrap in a napkin.'"

The Society of Friends disapprove of the art of painting; yet, when West, who has since delighted so many by his beautiful scripture pieces, discovered that he possessed this talent, his parents (who feared to do wrong by encouraging his taste) called a meeting to inquire whether he might be allowed to improve his powers; when it was most wisely decided, that it was bestowed upon him from above, and, therefore, could not be given in vain. And there may be those who have gazed upon his beautiful representations till they have felt a new and holy desire to be like those whose lives are written for our example.

"And music, too, mamma; can there be any use in music?"

"Are we to suppose that the sweet singer of Israel touched the only harp which could calm a spirit as disturbed as Saul's? Or, that his

was the only music which could lead the heart to praise creation's King? We may safely believe, that knowledge, of whatever kind, is from above, and is not given in vain. Had it not been for the sciences of optica and geometry, we should have had no idea how our world, and other worlds than ours, are borne through space, which may be infinite; and yet, perhaps, those who first pursued these studies had no idea to what sublime discoveries they would lead."

"Oh! why is it, mamma," said Mary, "that every learned man is not good? I heard the gentleman, who called the other morning, telling papa of one who is not."

"This world, my child, is a state of temptation; but, there is mentioned in the beautifully figurative language of the gospel, an armour of God, which will enable us to withstand its trials; and those who refuse to put on this armour will be too unprepared, on every acquisition of knowledge, to resist the pride which would impel them to boast, that it was by their own might and the strength of their own arm they had gained this victory. It will never be the high privilege of such an one to look up to God and say

‘ Each blessing to my soul more dear,
Because conferred by thee :’

“ It is to the pure alone that ‘all things are pure.’ The pure heart will receive, with the humility of a Newton, the gifts of knowledge, and as it opens its stores, will adore the power whence all its blessings flow.”

“ But religious people,” said Mary, after she had walked on a few steps, “ how surprising that *they* should be dull and disagreeable! Are they really dull and disagreeable, mamma?”

“ My dear Mary, just now you were wondering that all learned men are not good. If, as I have just said, all knowledge is of God—if, without His armour, the armour of religion, it cannot be pursued safely—if, with it, the purified mind draws from every art and science thoughts of praise to the Giver of all good, how came you to think that religion *could* make people dull and disagreeable ?”

“ I was thinking of what passed at my cousin’s, when we spent the day with her a little time ago. I forgot you did not know my thoughts. We walked out together, and Harriet Eastman was with us. She began describing to Jane some friends of hers, who she said were very religi-

ous, and, like all religious people, dull and disagreeable, and so *very* particular; and then she began laughing at them. I was just going to tell her, I thought religion made every one cheerful and happy; for I thought of you, mamma, and papa, and Mr. and Mrs. Snowdon, and Mrs. Graham and Agnes. But when she laughed I did not say what I had intended, for I did not like those I loved so much to be laughed at."

"I believe I know, my dear, of whom Harriet was speaking, and, if I am right, I am not surprised that she should have thought her, and many of her friends, dull and gloomy—disagreeable is, I think, going a little too far. But, is Harriet sure that *pure* religion makes them so? We might almost as justly say, that religion makes man useless, because some have thought it right to shut themselves up in religious houses, and see their fellow-creatures only through the iron grating of a convent gate. Could you, my Mary, hear these ladies' description of what they consider 'the truth as it is in Jesus,' you would scarcely think that they read in the same holy volume of the God who has

sown light for the righteous and joy for the upright in heart,—who has made the hills to rejoice, and has crowned the earth with beauty and gladness for the creatures of his care,—whose chastening is that of a father to the children of his love,—whose anger endureth for a moment, who waiteth to be gracious, and to accept the sacrifice of a broken and a contrite heart; or that their New Testament contained the gospel of the Saviour representing his Father, in the parable of the prodigal son, as advancing to receive the penitent, while he was yet a great way off. Surely they must have learned of some other master than Jesus, who cannot rejoice in the innocence of childhood, and feel, that of such is the kingdom of heaven. The volume which speaks in every page of an Almighty Father's love is most likely to lead them from the inquiry, Hath God forgotten to be gracious? to exclaim with David, 'Lo, this is my infirmity, yea, rather because his compassions fail not, my lips shall praise him.' If such the confidence of the disciple of Moses, shall the follower of Jesus, whose prayer ascends to his God and our God, tremble to rest the forgive-

ness of sins, the hope of salvation, on the free unpurchased mercy of the returning prodigal's father?"

"Oh, mamma, I love that parable so very much, and it seems to me that no one who believes what Jesus said should be afraid of being forgiven, just as the prodigal was; and whenever I think of it, I am so very sorry that I do not always strive to love and obey such a Father, because it seems so very ungrateful."

"My dear girl, cherish that feeling till it is ever yours: love can only be proved by obedience. Do you remember Mr. Snowdon's text last Sunday morning?"

"I think it was, 'But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do.' They were our Saviour's own words."

"Here is our own gate," said Edgar; "I did not want to be at home so very soon. Mamma, will you take us out another night?"

"Pray do," said Mary; "we have been so very happy, so much happier than we were with Harriet Eastman, though she made us laugh very much; and then I felt uncomfortable when we

got home: you know you told me I looked vexed; you will not tell me so to-night, at least, not if I look as I feel."

"You have not told mamma," said Ellen, "that Harriet's friends would not let her go to dances, because they did not think dancing right. Was it not strange?"

"I should not like you to go."

"Why, mamma? You sing to us yourself while we dance; and I am sure that, the other day, when dear little Alice tried to dance too, you laughed as much as any of us."

"It is very true, Ellen; and I hope I shall often see you all dancing again in the very gladness of your hearts, as playful as your own kitten, as innocent and gay as the rising lark."

"Do tell us, then, how it is, for you always like us to be happy. I am sure you would let us go to dances if you did not think them wrong."

"Could I choose your companions, you should meet on our own lawn, and I should rejoice to hear 'music and dancing.'"

"Oh, mamma, you are thinking again of our favourite parable."

“I was, my love ; had music and dancing been in themselves wrong, they would not have been chosen as the symbols of such joy. I cannot, with such an example, be frightened at the *name* of a dance. It is the manner in which they are generally supported—the vanity to which they lead—the too often worse than thoughtless laugh of the many who frequent them, who are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, which chiefly keeps me from such scenes. I should fear to see again my Mary look as vexed as when she returned from her walk with Harriet Eastman ; and yet I would rather she did grieve at the recollection of thoughtless ridicule applied to so solemn a subject, than that she should be accustomed to the sound until it lost its power to shock. The most degraded religious superstition is surely more respectable than the thoughtless levity which despises all. And now, dears, take off your bonnets, and come down directly ; I hope that to-night we are better prepared to enjoy our highest privilege than we should be returning late and exhausted from a dance.”

And in that little worshipping assembly we trust there were joy and peace. And when, as

Mrs. Elmore opened the sacred volume, she looked upon the placid, attentive countenances of her children, hers was a delight as pure as mother's heart can know. And as they separated for the night, and the parting kiss was given, the "God bless you, my little ones," was imparted with the feeling which should ever accompany it, that that best blessing might, indeed, be theirs.

"And dear papa will be home to-day," said Ellen, as she placed her mamma's chair at the breakfast-table, the next morning. "I have just been out to look at my moss rose-tree, and I hope I shall have a bud opened for him to-morrow. The moss smells quite sweetly now. I wish I had another for you too, mamma; but I want this for papa, because you know he gave me the tree when he saw I was trying——"

And here the little girl stopped.

"To cure yourself of impatience. So I must finish the sentence for you," said Mrs. Elmore, smiling.

"Yes, mamma," said the blushing Ellen; "and whenever I feel inclined to be impatient, I think of my moss rose. I had rather all the trees in my garden were dead than that one."

"I am sure," said Mary, "Ellen deserves the pleasure of giving papa a rose, for, before he went out, she had a beautiful bud she was going to pick for him, and Edgar's ball knocked it off quite short."

"Yes, mamma, and I did it quite carelessly too, and yet Ellen was not angry; she only cut it off and buried it, because, she said, looking at it only vexed her. She could not help the tears coming into her eyes, but she did not say a word to me. Was it not very good of her? I shall be very careful never to hurt Ellen's trees again."

"I told you not to tell mamma," said the little girl, half laughing, half crying, "and I am sure it did not signify, for I was quite happy all the day. It was the very day, mamma, you told me that I was as gay as a bird."

"Poor Ellen," said Alice, (who, seeing her sister's tears, put her little arms round her neck,) "don't cry. Ellen shall have all Alice's flowers to-morrow."

The "Thank you, little darling," a kiss, and Ellen's happy face, soon brought the sunshine again to Alice."

"Alice does not yet know that there are

other tears than those of sorrow ; and mamma," said Mrs. Elmore, " has just learnt that the little girl who was as gay as a bird, purchased, with a conquest over self, a pleasure as pure and more lasting than that of even offering to papa her first rose-bud."

" And I do not care for what you said, Ellen," said her brother ; " you know I did not promise, and I shall tell papa all about it."

" Never mind," said Mary, " I am not like Alice, I do not mind that sort of tears. Oh, dear, how much we shall have to tell papa ! Do you think he will have time to listen to us ? There is all about our walk. Do you think he will be able to walk with us to-night ? Will you let us learn, this morning, the names of all the planets ; and their different sizes and distances from the sun ?"

" I can have no objection to your beginning, this morning, with the names of the planets and their distances from the sun ; but you must not attempt too much at once. Their different sizes must be work for another day, and the lengths of their years for a third. But Ellen does not like learning by heart. How is this, Ellen, have you changed your mind ?"

"Oh, yes, mamma: pray do not remind me of that, I shall never say so again, because," she continued, covering her face with her hands, "that was a bit of my impatience."

"I am quite ready to give you my promise, my love, for as long as you keep yours."

"But will papa, do you think, be able to walk with us?" said Mary.

"*One* of the three questions which were asked at a time. You must not be surprised that it was necessary to remind me of all but the last. I do not think he will, to-night, or perhaps for two or three nights; and as you have much to learn, it may be as well that it should be so."

"I know why," said Edgar, "the grass is being cut to-day, and papa will have walking enough in the hay-field. But we can go and enjoy ourselves there, and Alice can roll about in the hay."

"You have guessed right in part, Edgar; but papa will have other business to attend to when first he comes home. But you all seem inclined to fast, excepting Alice."

"Yet, I am sure, we are all hungry; we were saying so before we came in, for we have been

up a long time. The mowers waked us whetting their scythes, and we went out early to watch them, and then watered our flowers ; but I forgot I was hungry while we were talking."

"Well, Edgar, I must stop you now, that you may remember, or we shall have more talk than work this morning."

But the breakfast was soon ended, and the studies went on as happily as the talk. Latin, French, and even ciphering, appeared to have acquired a new relish ; for Mary reminded the younger ones, that what *seemed* uninteresting and useless now would not be learnt in vain ; that it might, at least, help them to understand the discoveries which more learned men had made ; and that without ciphering, which they had thought the dullest of all, they could never enter into the comparative sizes of the planets.

The morning was scarcely long enough for their eager inquiring minds. It was not without effort that the Roman history was laid aside to allow time to learn the accounts of the planets. Edgar almost fancied he could have liked to go back to the times of the patriotic Romans, who were so ready to devote themselves for their country. He never could

dwell upon the injustice and cruelty of their wars ; but when the battles were won and the triumphal processions commenced, he longed for the glories of the successful general, forgetful, until the more thoughtful Mary reminded him of the captive monarchs in chains, and the long train of their subjects who, if they did not gratify the revengeful spirit of their victors with the sight of tears and sufferings, bitterly mourned, in the solitude of their bondage, the loved land of their birth, the country for which they, too, would have been willing to die.

The children had scarcely finished repeating the planetary table which Mrs. Elmore had written out for them, when papa's ring was heard, and three happy faces were presented at the opening door. Each loved that first embrace which circled all, and seldom was it missed, except from the consciousness that it was undeserved. To-day all were there, with countenances which might have satisfied the most anxious that all was well. But Mrs. Elmore was right, papa was too hurried to listen to the history of what had passed during his absence ; and it was not until the next morning,

just as they were returning from their walk, that the children, meeting him at the front door, were suffered to lead him in and keep him prisoner, to relate their pleasures. Ellen, as soon as she saw him, ran back into the garden for her beautiful rose; and as the knife was moved nearer or farther from it, while she settled the precise best length of the stalk, before she could make up her mind exactly where to cut it, and she walked slowly back lest she should break its little stem, Edgar, who was eager to tell how very good she had been, had ample opportunity of sounding his sister's praises. Happy, indeed, was Mr. Elmore, whose children withdrew from an embrace, bestowed on the burst of affection, which rejoiced in a sister's virtuous triumph to enjoy the generous pleasure of seeing her in her father's arms, and listening to the loved commendation.

"You are now, my Ellen," said he, "but a child, and this, to many, might seem a childish thing; but we know who has said, 'He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much.' Go on, my child, my children," said he, as he drew them all towards him, "helpers of one another's joys on earth, till you shall meet"

(and here the father's voice faltered with emotion) "to enjoy more perfect bliss in your heavenly Father's presence."

Heartfelt were the thanksgivings this morning offered for the blessings and endearments of domestic life; and when, before the children separated for their several tasks, they joined in a petition for papa's company in the evening walk, Mr. Elmore felt, that in their innocent pleasures he should find greater rest from the business and turmoil of the world than in gayer but more heartless circles.

"Mamma," said Mary, when she had repeated the lengths of the years of the different planets, "yesterday I learnt that the earth was ninety-five millions of miles from the sun, and the Georgium Sidus one thousand eight hundred millions: ninety-five millions seemed such a very great distance for light and heat to travel, that I could not think of one thousand eight hundred millions, as so much more, because it appeared, mamma, I do not know how to tell you what I mean, but farther than I could think of. This morning I have been reckoning that it is twenty times the number of miles from the sun that our earth is; and now I seem to have a

better idea of the distance, and I should think that every thing would be frozen in the Georgium Sidus, and that it must be impossible there can be any heat there."

"Impossible, my dear, to Him to whom all things are possible! Let us not forget the Creator in the immensity of His works; let us be grateful that he has given us to understand a little portion of his ways, nor ever dare to call that impossible which our finite minds cannot comprehend. Nay, my love," said Mrs. Elmore, seeing her little girl's eyes fill with tears, "I did not mean to reproach, but to guard you against forming a habit too common, I know, to all, of referring the beautiful harmony and order of all that we behold to what is sometimes called 'the law of nature,' as if He, who 'but speaketh, and it is done,' were not immediately, though invisibly, present; as if all things hung not on creative power, or as the apostle so beautifully expresses it, 'live and move, and have their being in Him.' In this instance, however, we may not be totally ignorant of the manner in which the most distant planet may be blessed with heat; for, since those who have ascended in balloons to the higher regions of the air have

found that, as the atmosphere became rarer, the cold was intense, though they were, by these few miles, nearer to the sun ; we may suppose that by a denser or differently constituted atmosphere, the rays of light and heat, which traverse one thousand eight hundred millions of miles, may be multiplied by reflection, so as to render the heat of the Georgium Sidus equal to that of our earth. And, even if this supposition be erroneous, we will not fear that He who formed that world hath not made it to rejoice. But we must not stay longer talking, my love, for I promised your papa to join him in the hay-field before dinner, and the little ones are waiting under the window for you. Ah ! there is Edgar's impatient call. You may all come into the field to us if you like."

The hay was being put in cocks ; Mr. Elmore cut some sticks out of the hedge which were pronged at the end, for the children to try and put some up, and they worked as busily, until the dinner bell rang, as if they had been regular little haymakers, wondering all the time at some children, of about their own age, who stood leaning over a stile staring at them, to think that they should prefer absolute idle-

ness to cheerful employment. Edgar at last ran up to ask them why they did not go home if they had nothing to do; when they said they had to mind the children, pointing, at the same time, to something red under a distant cock, which Edgar then first noticed, and on which, on coming to the spot, he found to be three sleeping infants, who had been left in charge of the idlers at the stile, but who were much better protected by a little dog, which would not suffer Edgar to go near, snarling and barking whenever he approached any of the old coats, cloaks, or shawls, that were scattered round. It was not until Edgar had watched the group some minutes that he recollected he had heard the dinner-bell, and seeing that his father, mother, and sisters, had all left the field, he made the best of his way to the house. He was quite out of breath when he sat down to table, but as soon as he could speak, he began asking how it was, that those who had no work did not play or read. Mr. Elmore said, that most likely they had played till they were tired, and that, probably, they scarcely knew how to read.

“Then, dear papa, let me teach them, and

lend them books, and then they will not hang over the stile looking so stupid."

"I have promised Mary, that when she is a little older, she shall assist in our Sunday-school, and when they are all able, I shall be pleased to see all my children there. But something more must be done than merely teaching them to read. They have not all had mothers, my little boy, who have held the hand which was raised in passion, when the tower of bricks was thrown down, to strike the sister who had by accident shaken the table, till the hasty fit was passed, and the child was taught to do to others as he would that they should do to him. Their parents may never have told them the history of the Saviour, who, in cruel mockery, was clothed in the robes of royalty, scourged, reviled, and spit upon, before he was nailed to the cross, yet who prayed even for his enemies—till they have been led by the love of him who was thus lifted from the earth to learn of him. Those who attempt to instruct the ignorant should go in the spirit of their Lord, with the warm feeling of compassion for the lambs who may not yet have been fed with the bread of life, conscious, that the spirits

which may have lived only in darkness and sin, are yet immortal; and anxious to train them, not for this life only, but for that nobler existence which they hope to enjoy with them beyond the grave."

"Agnes always goes with Mrs. Graham, to help in her class; she says she should like it very much, if the children were not so dirty in their habits, notwithstanding all the pains which are taken with them; and that she knows that some use such very wicked language out of school, though they are taught so much better: but that her mamma has told her, when she feels disgust towards them, to remember, that it was with a very different spirit Jesus felt the ingratitude of the Jews, who had rejected and were about to crucify him, when he wept over Jerusalem."

"I should not wish you, my dear Mary, to follow a better example than Mrs. Graham's. It is because she feels that all her fellow-creatures are children of the same God, heirs of the same glorious hopes, and looks upon those little ones with the sorrow of a Christian parent, who sees her children forsaking the paths of peace, that she persuades with an

earnestness which has reached the heart of many a young offender, and, by the blessing of Him who giveth the increase, has brought the wanderer into the Christian fold. She has, I trust, the prayers of many a ransomed one, who will be to her a crown of rejoicing in the presence of that Saviour, who lived and died to redeem sinners from the error of their ways."

"Oh, papa!" exclaimed Mary, "I shall never be able to do so much good."

"Do your best, my love; if you possess but one talent, improve it, and you will be of the number of the faithful servants who may enter into the joy of their Lord. Our portion of ability is given us by our heavenly Father. What higher privilege ought we to desire, than that of fulfilling his will in the station which he has appointed for us?"

Mr. Elmore was now called out of the room, and Mrs. Elmore went to see a poor sick neighbour, so that the children were left to themselves until tea time. Indeed, Mrs. Elmore was so late, that Edgar began to be sure they should be disappointed.

When the party went out on the lawn, with

the intention of choosing again the favourite way through the shrubbery, they found the dew very heavy, and were obliged to turn back, and take the road across the common. But the cooled air, which had deposited the dew upon the scorched earth, gave fresh beauties to the common-walk. The vapour which still continued to rise from the heated waters of the distant river, but which was not now required to temper the excessive heat of the air, was suspended as a thick mist over the water, and distinctly marked the course of the beautifully winding stream. The little birds were singing their last song, or may we not rather call it, hymn of praise? and, as the setting sun sank below the horizon, it might truly be said, that

“Millions of happy birds sung him to rest.”

Ellen and Edgar, who were walking on some little way before, picked up a glow-worm, which they turned back to shew. “It shone,” said Ellen, “just like a little star in the grass; and, mamma, you are not telling us about the stars to-night; we are almost too early, I think, to see them. But I should like to know something about all those which are not among the pla-

nets. What are they? Have *they* no sun to warm and light them?"

"My dear, there is but little I can tell you of those distant spheres. You know our Earth is ninety-five millions of miles from the Sun, but the nearest of those fixed stars is two hundred thousand times more distant still."

"Oh, mamma!" said Mary, "I had almost said impossible again: and it is impossible for me to understand it."

"You may have more idea of the distance, my dear, when I tell you that light, which travels even faster than sound, and which is eight minutes in passing from the Sun to our Earth, would, travelling at the same rate, be more than three years in passing to us from the nearest fixed star. If you were to suppose a new fixed star now created, and placed at that distance, it would not be visible to us for three years to come."

"How could any one find out such great distances, and measure the miles, and all?" said Edgar. "I am sure he must have been a very clever man."

"All was not discovered by one mind, or in one age," said Mr. Elmore. "Anaxagoras, who lived before Christ, taught in Athens that

the Earth travelled round the Sun ; and, in later times, Copernicus, Galileo, and our own Newton, have thrown the light they acquired on the subject. We owe them, indeed, much for the knowledge of such sublime creations."

" But, papa," said Ellen, " I do not now know what those stars are. Do they move round the Sun, though they are so far off ? And must they not be very, very large, for us to be able to see them ? "

" You know they are fixed stars, not planets. They are supposed to be suns, like ours, with worlds circling around them, perhaps, similar to those which move round our sun."

" Oh ! how astonishing," said Mary ; " to think of that great Being who rules all those worlds, and, at the same time, makes every little creeping worm and every tiny insect so full of enjoyment, and so beautiful, too ! And this earth, so full of life, with its sweet flowers, and all their different scents—for they, too, are His—Oh ! it is no wonder that I feel so very little, as if I were almost nothing : and yet I know that God loves even such as I am, for I remember what Jesus said about the sparrows."

" Yes, my love, we have no cause for fear.

The Creator of these glorious works has called himself our Father, and has given to us to know how great and good He is. Little—next to nothing, indeed—should we be of ourselves ; but it is our high privilege to be able to imbibe His spirit, and aspire to all that is pure and holy ; and when this earth and all those distant, wondrous worlds shall have passed away, we shall ascend to our Father and our God. Let us be careful that, like our Lord and Master, we are not of this world, but live as children of God. As sons of God we cannot be nothing. They, indeed, should despise themselves who feel not His presence—content to glory in their own strength, and who live unmindful of their heavenly home.”

After a long pause, Edgar exclaimed, “ I wonder how those wise men, whose names I do not remember, found out about the way in which the Earth moves ! I think they should have had triumphal arches, and processions, and crowns of laurel, like the Romans, you know, mamma, when they returned from victory. As for the kings and generals in chains, I should think they were too good to wish for that, for that could not make the world better or happier.”

"Ah! my boy," said his father; "far different has been the lot of many of the greatest benefactors of our race, who though they may not, like our Lord, have died the death of the accursed, have lived, as criminals, a life of exile from their native land!"

"Why, papa! surely they would not banish any one for telling what all must have been glad to know?"

"Every one is not patient enough to inquire, What is truth? and there are many instances of persecution on account of opinions which have since been generally received. Anaxagoras, of whom we were speaking, was sentenced to death by the Athenians, for maintaining that the Earth revolved on its own axis and travelled round the Sun. Through the interest of a friend, his sentence was afterwards exchanged for exile."

"But, papa, that was before the time of our Saviour, and the Athenians were heathens. You could not expect them to know right like a Christian, or even like a Jew."

"I wish, my dear boy, it had been only heathens who have condemned their fellow-men for their opinions at the bar of their own igno-

rance. Christians have been guilty of the same crime, for precisely the same offence, in the case of Galileo, who, in his seventieth year, was summoned before the Inquisition, as a man of most dangerous principles; and there, on his knees, with one hand on the sacred Scriptures, was compelled to swear that he cursed and detested, as contrary to the word of God, that which is now received as truth by every civilized nation. After being for some time in the prisons of the Inquisition, he was allowed to end his days in a small village in Tuscany.— Yes, Christians, alas! have even persecuted one another, because, while reading the Gospel of their crucified Lord, their finite minds have not comprehended alike its holy truths.”

“How very strange,” said Mary, “and how sad, too, that the great and good should be so persecuted!”

“Safety from error, my dear child, is best sought by those who, with the firm persuasion of the fallibility of all that is human, examine the opinions of all who are esteemed wise, but who are too sensible of the responsibility of their rational nature to prostrate themselves

before any theory of man. Even the conceptions of their own minds, the sentiments which have been fondly entertained, will be readily sacrificed at the shrine of truth. Such is the independence of the humble mind ; the independence which cleared the clouds of error from an Anaxagoras and a Galileo, and which led Newton to gather a harvest of knowledge from the fall of an apple, and to resign his theory of planetary attraction, while coupled with error, until it burst upon him in all the brightness of truth."

"I cannot understand, now," said Edgar, "how people can be slaves to what others think."

"I heard you the other day telling Ellen, that you knew you were right, *because* papa said so—"

"Yes, papa ; and I am sure you know better than we do."

"Papa is wiser than his little boy now ; but his little boy will be a man one day, and then, with all the benefit of the mighty wisdom of his father, it is possible his mind may be better prepared to clear away any rubbish which may

have been packed into his warehouse. But if *then* he refuse to examine whether the opinions he has imbibed be true ; if *then* he rest satisfied with them, *because* they are his father's, he will be the slave of his father's opinions ; he will not have done his duty, and taken his share in the increase of knowledge in the world."

"Papa, you are not speaking of religious truth," said Mary.

"I am speaking, my dear, of truth in general. And if other subjects be worth an effort to preserve the intellect in a state to seek aright, how can the immortal mind strive too earnestly for the 'pearl of great price,' the living stream which alone can satisfy, the truth which alone can make him free ? And here, where knowledge is most precious, our Almighty Parent has added his volume of revelation to that of nature. We ought to see Him in all His works ; and were earthly parents wise enough to lead their infants to read the Book of Nature, to taste and see how good He is who filleth their hearts with food and gladness, giving grass for the cattle, and herbs for the service of man ; clothing the lilies of the field, and feeding the

ravens when they cry—the mouths of babes and sucklings would lisp their perfect praise, and glorify Him as the God who has written His name of ‘love’ on all His works below. And when, with minds thus prepared, the volume of grace should be opened before them, how supremely would they be able to love Him who first loved them! How clearly would they see, in all the warnings of the prophets, and in him who came to shew the Father as never before He had been revealed,—in the tender compassion which animated him to endure the cross—above all, and through all, a Father’s love, leading His children to purity! Surely, surely those who imbibe the spirit of Jesus—that love to God and man which drew forth St. John’s affectionate appeal, ‘Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God’—will not so misinterpret the truths of holy writ, that they shall be made to teach doctrines which Christ has not inculcated, which his death has not sealed. But we have need of caution, lest by various influences, lest by the holiness of those whose creed may yet contain errors, or by the sins of those who hold the truth in unrighte-

ousness, we should be led into error. Let us, therefore, search the Scriptures with uplifted hearts to the Hearer of prayer, that He would guide us by His spirit, till we shall see Him as He is."

The little party walked the rest of the way home in silence. Mr. Elmore had spoken of the ever-present God till his own mind was exalted by the contemplation, and his thoughts raised in silent praise to the Giver of every heavenward aspiration.

When Mary wished her father good night, he told her to guess what promise he had made for her, and to inquire if she could be up by six to keep it. Mary was sure she could, if papa wished it, though she could not guess what it could be, so early ; but when she heard that it was for a walk with Agnes Graham, she exclaimed, " Oh, papa ! how could you ask me if I could keep your promise, when you know how dearly I love Agnes ? How good it is of her to ask me, when she is so much wiser and better than I ! Thank you, dear papa ; you are always preparing some new pleasure."

" I have only one charge, Mary," said her

fond father. "Remember that Agnes has not been used to your long rambles. Be careful not to take her one of the favourite walks, beyond her strength, or Mrs. Graham will not trust you together again."

"And what shall we do without Mary?" said Mr. Elmore, turning to Ellen, who looked very much as if she longed to be one of the party. "I think you and I and Edgar must have a walk together, as Mary is going to run away from us. We will go down to the meadows, to see the new colts."

Mary was at her friend's door by six the next morning. Agnes was ready, and waiting for Mary, on whom she doated with sisterly affection. They had not been much together of late, for Agnes, the only child who had been spared to rejoice her anxious mother with more than the smiles of infancy, had been delicate all the spring, and had been taken to spend the long summer days by the sea-side; and though now the bloom was on her cheek, and she was again allowed the loved ramble with her chosen companion, and her light step seemed to rejoice in the gladness of returning strength, she still appeared the tender flower, which must bow

before the slightest blast, scarcely fit to bear the freshness of the early morning, or the hill-side shadows, next to which the dewy pearl-drop still hung. But her bounding spirit joyed in revisiting scenes which to her had spoken only of happiness,—in the spreading trees and tiny flowerets, which brought to her heart now, as when in earlier childhood she had traced the same paths by her mother's side, thoughts of Him who breathes in all His works; and there, now, she loved to walk hand in hand with Mary, and there, seeking with her the closest shade, to raise, in the temple not made with hands, devotion's hymn of praise.

Could Mr. Elmore have followed the quick footsteps till the lonely path was found, he would not have feared that they should lead too far; for if the mind's spring of gratitude communicated its bound to the light tread, the same feelings prompted the quiet gaze on the book of nature; and as the mist rose up the hills, or, like a flood of radiant rolling waves, floated over the valley, Agnes was wont to say, that every thing was rising to the heavens, or coming down in mercies; and then she would clasp her hands, exclaiming, "Yes, He is good!

What can be more beautiful? What must be those joys which eye hath not seen nor mind of man conceived?" "Dear Agnes," would Mary sometimes say, "there we shall be pure as the air we breathe;" but on the morning of which we are speaking when she watched her friend's animated countenance, and the flush of excitement on her cheek, the tear started into her eye at the recollection of danger past, but which might again recur, and she threw her arms around her, sobbing, "There, Agnes, your cheek will never be pale,—there we shall not fear to lose you!"

"And in that world where the love of God will be an ardent, ever-glowing affection, his children will need no other tie; there, Mary, I shall not regret that you are not my sister. Oh! I am selfish, very selfish! I do not deserve the happiness I here enjoy, if it makes me forget that others sorrow, that the tear is not here wiped from every eye, that there are want and wretchedness in the world, and guilt which hides from man his Master's smile, that Christ does not yet reign over every heart. I spoke only as I felt at the moment, for I am sure I often long for higher, more perfect bliss.

But I have not felt so happy as I am now a long while. I admired the grandeur of the sea. But I have so wished for home! I wanted you, Mary, and when Sunday came, I could not hear Mr. Snowdon's voice. I dare say the prayers and sermons were very good,—mamma felt them so; but I cannot love the voice of a stranger."

Here Agnes was silent a few minutes; then said abruptly, but in a lower tone,

"Mary, you know I have wished to take the Lord's Supper; I did not tell mamma until yesterday; I thought I was too young; but she does not think so, and has written to Mr. Snowdon to ask him if he sees any objection. I hope he will not! He only returned for answer, that he would call in to-night, and, perhaps, I may be admitted to-morrow."

"Then, dear Agnes, I shall not see you again before. How I shall think of you all the service! Will you let me walk with you again on Monday?"

"Oh, Mary! you know how dearly I love to have you. Good bye, I must not go on with you, I am late now; good bye."

Here Agnes turned into the garden and Mary hastened home.

She found Ellen and Edgar in high spirits. "They had had such a delightful walk with papa, and they did not so very much mind if Mary should walk again with Agnes, if papa would go with them instead, though they wanted her too, and they were sure she would have liked to have gone with them; and she could not guess what papa had been saying, something so very wonderful."

And they then began, both telling her at once, that the colts raced round the field till they came to the part where they were, then started off altogether so very, very fast, and raced all round till they came to the same place again, just as if they had been playing like Alice. We said we should have been quite giddy if we had been riding them. And what do you think papa says?

"Don't tell her, Ellen," said Edgar; "let us see if she can possibly guess."

And then in his eagerness to be the first to relate the wonderful, Edgar continued, almost in the same breath, "One thousand miles every hour!"

"What is one thousand miles an hour?"

"Why, the earth goes round on its axis al-

most as fast as one thousand miles an hour. Did I not say so at first? and yet we are not giddy; and the earth is travelling, at the same time, about three millions of miles round the sun, and papa is going to put me a sum all about it, that I may know the distance exactly. Now, is it not very wonderful, Mary? You could not have guessed, could you? So it is not surprising, papa, that Ellen and I did not know. Now, would not you rather walk another day with papa than with Agnes?"

Mary, in her distress for an answer, looked up in a perplexity, which made Mr. Elmore smile.

"So Mary," said he, "you prefer Agnes' company to papa's? Well, never mind; I will not be affronted; it is not very wonderful that a little girl, at thirteen, should choose the company of one nearly her own age, rather than her old papa's. Though we find that thirty-eight can manage to play with ten and eleven. Do we not, Edgar?"

"Now, dear papa," said Mary, "I wish you would not speak of my preferring Agnes to you. I am sure I do not," said she, fondly kissing her father's forehead; "but you know I cannot see Agnes every day. I remember

you said you liked me to be with her ; and if you knew her as well as I do, you would love her as well. Indeed, you would, papa ; and you would wish that we were all like her, she is so very good."

"And why should you not be like her, Mary?"

"Oh, I do not know ; but I never shall be like Agnes."

A peep at Mrs. Graham's breakfast table would have shewn Agnes equally warm in Mary's praises.

"Mary," said Agnes, "always thinks so justly ; she does not say one minute what she is obliged to unsay the next."

Agnes' recollections of Mary were, this morning, mixed with anticipations of Mr. Snowdon's visit—with anxiety, lest his opinions should not meet her wishes. To Mr. Snowdon she looked up with an affectionate reverence, to which increasing knowledge gave increasing strength, and which was fully returned by the kind pastor's parental love. He had been her father's early friend, had received his last breath, and mingled his tears with his sorrowing widow's, as he committed "dust to dust."

And could he see his friend's child, then smiling in its mother's arms unconscious of its loss, till even its infant smile was checked by the language of grief in her saddened countenance, and not feel for it a father's affection? And Agnes' growing virtues, the look of gratitude with which she ever received the appellation of "my own child," by which he was used to distinguish her among the rest of his flock, his larger family, was not likely to check the paternal interest. And now, oh, how gladly did he receive the intimation, that she desired he should break for her the bread and administer to her the cup of remembrance which the suffering Saviour had committed to his disciples! It seemed to put the seal to the cherished conviction, that "Christ dwelt in her heart by love." We need not tell how often, through this day, Agnes' hopes and fears were repeated to her mother, how often, after following her to other subjects, she reverted to that uppermost in her thoughts; for to the friend who was ever ready to sympathise in her joys and sorrows, she could speak out of the abundance of her heart. Before evening came, her mother, whose con-

stant habit it had become to watch her every change of countenance, feared that a day which, to a casual observer, would have seemed to pass with more than usual quietness, had been one of too great excitement to her sensitive child : for her cheek was flushed, and her breathing quick, and when she affectionately laid her hand on hers, inquiring "if she could not calmly wait Mr. Snowdon's guidance, trusting that he would decide for the best," Agnes replied, "Oh, yes, dear mamma, I know he will ; but still I cannot help being anxious ; and then so many thoughts come into my mind, thoughts of Him who so affectionately desired to eat this passover with his disciples, when he felt his sufferings so near ; and surely the remembrance of agonies, borne with such calm resignation that all might be constrained to receive the purifying truths he taught, when they should be sealed with his death, ought to make me strive to be more like him. Is not that what is meant by the love of Christ constraining us ?"

"Yes, my dearest girl,—to live to him who died for us,—to keep our hearts with all diligence,—to watch unto prayer, and then, may

we not, nay, ought we not, to go on our way rejoicing, to remember who has said, ' Fear not little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom ' ?

" But here are Mr. and Mrs. Snowdon," said Mrs. Graham, whose eyes were directed to the window by the sound of voices.

It was with a manner more than usually affectionate Agnes was met by her revered friend, with more than his usual tenderness that he raised both her hands and pressed them between his own, while, for one instant, with a gaze of benevolent interest, he read a countenance which was little likely to deceive his experienced eye, and which his first expression proved he needed not language to explain.

" My dear Agnes," said he, as he led her into the adjoining room, " why did not mamma tell me how anxious you were? I would have come in last night when I received her note; and why ——"

" Oh, Sir !" said Agnes, interrupting him, and looking earnestly up ; " perhaps I ought not to have made the request so soon ; perhaps I am not fit to be admitted."

" I would, my dear child, that all who ap-

proach the table of their Lord, were as devoted disciples of him whose sufferings they there commemorate; though the simple desire to fulfil his command, and to submit in all things to his holy precepts, is, in my opinion, the only requisite. Jesus himself has left us no restriction. It is one of the means he has bequeathed us to strengthen and perpetuate the love which should incite to the imitation of his perfections. Nor can I see why any Christian, who sends his thoughts to heaven in prayer in the hope that there they may find acceptance, need fear to be an unwelcome guest at his table, who is described, even now, as being touched with a feeling of our infirmities. No; you have nothing to fear. To-morrow rejoice, though it be with grateful sorrow, to celebrate this feast of dying love. To-morrow, Agnes, one who loves you as a father will delight to receive you among your fellow-worshippers; now, no longer only as a child, but as above a child, a beloved sister, a professed disciple of Christ."

Agnes tried to speak, but her heart was too full; she could only draw the hand in which hers had been held towards her and press it to her lips. Nor, till she had sought her own

chamber and there given vent to feelings which, between hope and fear, love, joy, and gratitude, conquered all restraint,—could she sufficiently command herself to join the circle, which to her seemed but as one family.

Mr. Snowdon paid but a short visit. Saturday evening was the time he principally devoted to his poor friends, whom he loved to find in their neatly cleaned cottages, the discarded working dress, well filled market-basket, and the quiet satisfaction which dwelt in the sun-burnt countenances, were happy foretastes of the day of rest, of which the weary labourer knows the value; and where industrious poverty had been unable to store the sabbath provision, it was the Christian father's delight to add his mite to the scanty purse, that on one day, at least, all might eat of the fatness of the earth, and even lisping babes rejoice in an appointment which, he hoped, they might live to bless for higher benefits.

Many were the happy walks which Mary and Agnes enjoyed before the shortening days, the withering fern, and pale yellow foliage of the ash, gave warning that autumn's mists were to be expected, and that the richer hues of the

dark chestnut and the beach must wait for admiration until the mid-day walk. And now the narrow wood-path was forbidden ground, and they were compelled to bid farewell to their favourite walks until spring should again triumph over winter.

That following spring Mary trod not those paths, or she trod them alone. Oftener she spent the hour she called her own in Agnes' chamber to watch the cheek which was, indeed, grown pale; the fine blue eye which had never before appeared so beautifully bright, though now it cast beneath the dark shadow which told how disease had wasted there. But its progress brought no terrors to her bosom. She had loved, while in health's happiest hours, to pass the bounds of time, and speak with Mary of the home which is eternal. There their affections indeed centered, though it was long after all hope of Agnes' recovery had forsaken those by whom she was so deservedly beloved, before she could venture to speak to them of the future; for when, during the early part of her illness, she had mentioned the possibility of her being taken from them, she saw the tears start to Mary's eyes; and Mrs. Graham seemed

to shrink from the bare allusion to a loss, of which the fear, nevertheless, was ever before her. It was to Mary Agnes first again broke the painful subject, to entreat her to be her mother's comforter when she should be left alone. "That, indeed," she exclaimed, "is my saddest thought! and you too, Mary, I must leave; yet, surely there can be no sorrow like a mother's. But, oh! she must, she will be able to look up in confidence to Him in whom the desolate and the widow may trust. Dearest Mary," she continued, seeing her friend had hidden her face in her hands to conceal her distress, "you should not sorrow as those who have no hope; but let us pray, that we may both be prepared. You know it is but a few short years can separate us; and why should we dread the last long sleep? It is, indeed, an awful thought that time is gone for ever, and that in the Eternal's presence our secret thought will be unveiled, and we might even tremble if we did not remember that he pities us as a father. You cannot think how often, when I lie awake at night, I repeat our Saviour's words, 'Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;' and surely

I ought not to be slow to trust the forgiveness of that merciful God who willeth not that any should perish, but is leading the multitude, whom no man can number, to the bliss which he is preparing for those who love him."

While Agnes was finishing speaking, Mr. Snowdon came into the room. He had heard enough to make him feel how meet were the spirits of these young ones of his fold to commune with the Universal Parent; and raising a hand of each within his own, he knelt by the bed of the youthful sufferer, and poured forth the heartfelt expressions of gratitude and submission, mingled with petitions, to the Hearer of Prayer, for His gracious assistance, while, endeavouring to bring every thought into subjection to His will, they passed through the trials he had allotted for them. And now, Lord, Thy will be done! was the sentiment of each supplicant. And this was almost happiness—one of those blest moments, when the creature seemed wrapped in the Creator's love, delighting in the consciousness that a power which was above would guide, and a father's arm support, the children who looked up to Him for strength.

While Mary was with Agnes, Mrs. Graham had endeavoured to obtain a little rest, for she had watched the long night by the side of her sleepless child, and her eyelids were heavy and her spirits weighed down, and she would gladly, for awhile, have forgotten her sorrows; and when she came again into the sick room, what a contrast to her own worn countenance was the clear, unclouded brow, the almost heavenly expression which lighted the pale features before her! And even her sad heart was almost cheered by Agnes' exclamation, "Dearest mother, I am so happy! and soon will this short life be passed, and we shall meet again where there will be no more sin nor sorrow." And she felt she could not wish to keep her here, and bowed in resignation to a Father's will, though "My own, my blest child!" were the only words she could utter.

But now Agnes had once spoken, she could speak again of the great change which she knew to be rapidly approaching; and the foretaste of that immeasurable bliss, where the presence of their God would purify them; and where, in the society of Jesus — their light

upon earth, their guide to their heavenly home—
they would be led on

“ From good to better, and better yet again ;
And better still, in infinite progression,”

was the delightful theme in which they often rejoiced. And in prayer, and praise, and thoughts like these, the moments glided by, and days and weeks were past, till that sleep, which neither languor nor disease disturbs, was sent for the weary frame ; and the mother, bending over her last earthly hope, committed her spirit to the God who gave it.

And now the parent's heart sank within her ! There was no cast or expression of gloom, for she knew and owned that a Father's love directed every trial. But her last strong tie to earth was severed, and she checked not the sorrow in which there was no repining. Hers was an affliction under which even the Christian may weep. These, too, were days of heaviest trial to Mary—Mary, who had never before known how lone is the feeling which follows the separation from the companion of every joy. For awhile her excited imagination seemed yet to commune with her loved Agnes ; and

as she gazed on the unconscious though yet beautiful form, she could scarcely realize the truth, that those lips were still, that life would never again animate those features!—never, till that morn should dawn to which they had so often looked forward with unmixed pleasure. Every word which she had spoken was now recalled, and treasured as a precious record; and to weep with the bereaved parent, to dwell with her on Agnes' memory, on Agnes' virtues, was her sweetest consolation.

One painful effort yet remained. The dear one must be committed to the earth. The allotted spot was not distant, and thither, by Agnes' own request, was she to be borne by the poor whom she loved; and her revered pastor, Mary, and her father, were to be the only mourners.

Fourteen years before, the stately hearse, followed by many who had known Mr. Graham, and who wished to shew this last mark of respect to him, had left that house; now (but it was Agnes herself wished it) no village train could be more simple—none, Mrs. Graham thought, attended by so few. She longed to join them, but felt her own strength altogether fail; and

she sought an upper chamber, one whence, on a clear day, she might have gazed on the rising ground, and distinguished the white tomb-stone which marked the spot where so many she loved already rested. But the mists of an early May morning yet hung over the valley; she could not even strain her anxious eye to catch the single branch of what had once been a magnificent laurel which hung over the grave. With what sad thoughts did she recal the hour, when, in the same room, her widowed heart clung to its remaining prop, and now, alas! how desolate!—and she covered her face with her handkerchief, and turned from a world whence that dear one had passed to the home where they should meet again.

Again did the mother look towards the spot where her earthly affections centered. The mist had partially rolled away. Could it be? Yes; as more intently she gazed, the soft sun-beam shone through the gloom:—there was no room for deception; near by the well-known laurel stood Mr. Snowdon. But what meant the throng that surrounded him, and the sound of many voices which now broke upon her ear? It was, indeed, the pure tribute of heartfelt

gratitude and love to her child. The few beside whom she had prayed in sickness, whose pillows she had smoothed while she spoke of purity and peace—the many who had looked up to her as a friend—the aged, who had received at her hand some token of kindness, while she pointed to the home to which they were tending, or whose little ones she was training in the Saviour's steps. Could she have taken a nearer view—have seen, leaning against the knotted trunk of the old tree, the overpowered pastor, whose quivering lips and upraised hand spoke what he would but could not utter, and the sorrowing countenances which needed no mourning garb to tell their grief, she would have felt the genuine tribute far more grateful than all the ceremonial of the funereal procession. And those who had thus proved their love for her Agnes, must they not be dear to her? Yes; she found solace in visiting their lowly abodes, in mingling her tears with theirs, while receiving the offering of simple heartfelt sympathy. On such occasions Mary was her willing companion, while her home, her books, her garden, seemed to have lost their charms. Her flowers were carefully

watered, her beds weeded by her affectionate sister, and Edgar had transplanted from his own little plot a beautiful myrtle, which had been given him by Agnes. "He could not have parted from it for any one else, but it was for Mary;" and when he saw that it had not drooped, he longed to entice her down the walk which led that way, that she might notice it, and he thought "she would surely like to take that under her care." And his generous affection was gratified—she could not be insensible to his sacrifice; and Ellen and Edgar again enjoyed the pleasure of having Mary to join them in, at least, one of their pursuits. Still she shrank from the studies in which she had been wont to take delight.

"I cannot," she one day said to Mr. Snowdon, "feel any interest in such things now; they are nothing in the world to which Agnes is gone."

"Nothing *there*," said Mr. Snowdon, "for, in that exalted state, 'knowledge' (the little we can gather here) 'shall vanish away'—be lost in the fuller light in which we shall behold all the works of our God. But, my dear Mary, was Agnes' cultivated mind lost in this world?

Sanctified by religion, it was, indeed, of great price. I cannot go into a cottage which that dear creature visited where its influence is not felt. I know, and I rejoice to know, that the gospel of Jesus has power to purify and to elevate as no other truth can. But the facility for acquiring knowledge is from our Father; let it, then, be improved in His service, assured that He will make it the minister of good: the end we may not see now, but we shall see hereafter. To do and to bear His will is here the high calling of the Christian."

The pastor but confirmed the earlier maternal instruction. The effort was made, Mary's books were again resumed, and her mind gradually recovered its tone of cheerfulness. And when the summer wind blew softly, and the gay butterfly floated on the gale,—when the very air seemed teeming with life, and the busy hum of insects spoke only of happiness, she again sought the glade where Agnes had so often delighted to rest, to listen to the distant waterfall, or watch the soaring bird as it dipt its wing and cast its shadow on the green earth. All now was glad and gay as ever; and though Mary raised a tearful eye, her spirit turned not

from the ever-varying harmonious voice of nature; and though to her young heart the bright and beautiful below were clouded, her aspirations rose with a deeper, holier glow, to that world where no tear can be shed, and the lone child could even now exclaim,

“ If these thy children’s joys below,
How blissful is their home!”

The following extracts from the poem by Mrs. Barbauld, entitled, "A Summer Evening's Meditations," are added, as being consonant to the design of this Tract, that of leading the mind of the young to contemplate the works of the Great Creator, to love and to adore His superintending providence, and to bow with submission to His decrees.

"'Tis past! The sultry tyrant of the South
Has spent his short-liv'd rage ; more grateful hours
Move silent on ; the skies no more repel
The dazzled sight, but, with mild maiden beams
Of tempered lustre, court the cherished eye
To wander o'er their sphere ; where, hung aloft,
Dian's bright crescent, like a silver bow
New strung in heaven, lifts high its beamy horns
Impatient for the night, and seems to push
Her brother down the sky. Fair Venus shines
Even in the eye of day ; with sweetest beam
Propitious shines, and shakes a trembling flood
Of softened radiance from her dewy locks.

'Tis now the hour
When Contemplation from her sunless haunts,
The cool damp grotto, or the lonely depth
Of unpierced woods, where, wrapt in solid shade,
She mused away the gaudy hours of noon,
And fed on thought unripened by the sun,
Moves forward, and with radiant finger points
To yon blue concave, swell'd by breath divine,
Where, one by one, the living eyes of heaven
Awake, quick kindling o'er the face of ether

One boundless blaze : ten thousand trembling fires
 And dancing lustres, where the unsteady eye,
 Restless and dazzled, wanders unconfined
 O'er all this field of glories ; spacious field,
 And worthy of the Master, He, whose hand
 With hieroglyphics older than the Nile
 Inscribed the mystic tablet, hung on high
 To public gaze, and said, ' Adore, O man !
 The finger of thy God.' From what pure wells
 Of milky light, what soft o'erflowing urn,
 Are all those lamps so fill'd ? these friendly lamps,
 For ever streaming o'er the azure deep,
 To point our path and light us to our home,
 How soft they slide along their lucid sphere !
 How deep the silence, yet how loud the praise !
 But are they silent all ? or is there not
 A tongue in every star, that talks with man,
 And woos him to be wise ? nor woos in vain :
 The dead of midnight is the noon of thought,
 And Wisdom mounts her zenith with the stars.
 At this still hour the self-collected soul
 Turns inward, and beholds a stranger there
 Of high descent and more than mortal rank,
 An embryo God ; a spark of fire divine,
 Which must burn on for ages, when the Sun,—
 Fair transitory creature of a day !—
 Has closed his golden eye, and, wrapt in shades,
 Forgets his wonted journey through the East.

" Seized in thought,
 On Fancy's wild and roving wing I sail,

From the green borders of the peopled Earth,
 And the pale Moon, her duteous fair attendant;
 From solitary Mars; from the vast orb
 Of Jupiter, whose huge gigantic bulk
 Dances in ether like the lightest leaf;
 To the dim verge, the suburbs of the system,
 Where cheerless Herschel, 'midst his watery moons,
 Sits like an exiled monarch: fearless thence
 I launch into the trackless deeps of space,
 Where, turning round, ten thousand suns appear,
 Of elder beam, which ask no leave to shine
 Of our terrestrial star, nor borrow light
 From the proud regent of our scanty day;
 Sons of the morning, first-born of creation,
 And only less than Him who marks their track
 And guides their fiery wheels. Here must I stop,
 Or is there ought beyond?

" Fancy droops,
 And Thought, astonished, stops her bold career;
 But, O thou mighty Mind! whose powerful word
 Said thus, 'Let all things be,' and thus they were;
 Where shall I seek thy presence? how unblamed
 Invoke thy dread perfection?

" O look with pity down
 On erring, guilty man! not in thy names
 Of terror clad; not with those thunders armed
 That conscious Sinai felt when fear appalled
 The scattered tribes;—thou hast a gentler voice
 That whispers comfort to the swelling heart,

Abashed, yet longing to behold her Maker.
But now, my soul, unused to stretch her powers
In flight so daring, drops her weary wing,
And seeks again the known accustomed spot,
Drest up with sun, and shade, and lawns, and streams;
A mansion fair, and spacious for its guest,
And full replete with wonders. Let me here,
Content and grateful, wait the appointed time,
And ripen for the skies : the hour will come
When all these splendours, bursting on my sight,
Shall stand unveiled, and to my ravished sense
Unlock the glories of the world unknown."
